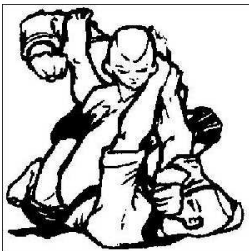


Hawai'i Dads (Makuakāne)

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Good for Kids...or Too Dangerous?



Mixed Martial Arts

The following excerpts are from Mixed Partial Arts by Kathy Bentley, Parent Educator, HCD Steering Committee (www.kathyparentingsolutions.com). The full Tips for Parents article is available at: <http://thepaf.org/hoalahou/>.

Mixed Martial Arts has been steadily gaining in popularity in the past few years. It has move from pay-per-view to network television to YouTube. Disturbingly, kids as fighters are a growing trend.

What is concerning to many parents and service agency professionals are the fights being staged in parking lots and other sites with no rules, no supervision, and no one to stop them when they become too dangerous. Some parents are even encouraging their children to fight; they are often the ones filming the fights and putting them on YouTube.

Dangers for young, developing bodies: What are some of the dangers of mixed martial arts for developing bodies? A person's brain continues to develop into their early 20's. The pre-frontal lobe, which contains the executive fundtion of our brain, is what allows us to be organized, make good decisions, and think about consequences of our actions. This part of the brain is not fully developed until around 23 or 24 years of age. An injury to this portion of the brain, while it is developing, may cause a person to have difficulty making good decisions, and can even make holding a job more challenging as they get older. ~HI Dads~

Kids only report one-out-of-every-10 concussions

Kids' Concussions Underreported



Recent high-profile sports injuries prompt doctors to examine younger athletes. And with about 1.5 million junior high school and high school students playing football in the United States each year, that's a lot of unreported head injuries (see ABC News "Good Morning America" report: <http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/story?id=3591087&page=1>).

Experts say parents should watch more than just the game:

- After a rough play, ask your child whether he or she is dizzy or lightheaded.
- Does he or she have recurrent headaches?

Rule of thumb—three concussions and it's time to stop playing the sport.

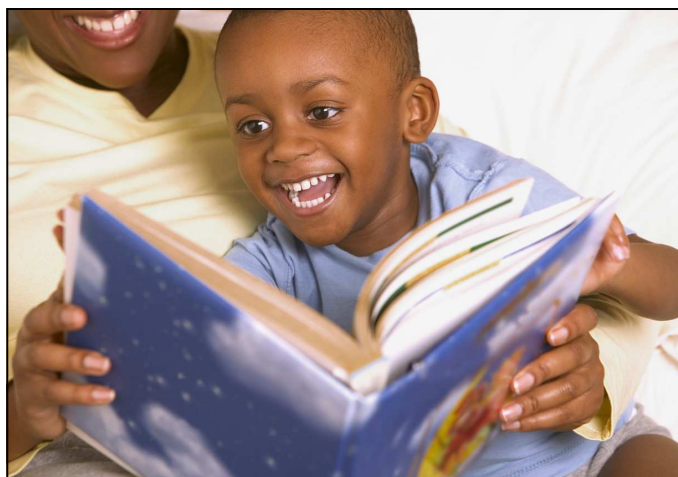
High schools around the country are becoming more aware of the possible dangers and long-term effects of concussions. Parents and coaches are also now using the HeadMinder test (www.headminder.com/site/cr/how_it_works.html). After a hit, the player answers a series of questions to test current cognitive ability. The score is tested against a baseline number to see whether there's been an injury and whether the player is ready to go back on the field. ~HI Dads~

Visit HCD's web pages: www.pacthawaii.org/hcd.html

Choosing books for babies and young children

Many educational studies show that when parents read to their children from the time they are babies; children learn to read earlier and are better readers later in school. Students with higher reading scores were more likely to report they had encyclopedias, magazines, newspapers and at least 25 books in their home. Having books and magazines at home is important.

Where to get books—Borrowing books from the **public library** is a good place to start. Many libraries now offer board books for infants and toddlers plus picture books for preschoolers. **Garage sales** and sales conducted by libraries are good sources of inexpensive books. Or you can organize a book exchange in your neighborhood or preschool so children can trade books. Discount stores, bookstores and Internet book sellers all have bargain sections or run specials. Your parent educator or librarian may also have suggestions for sources of inexpensive or free books in your area.



Where to keep books—Children need to have books **where they can reach them**, so consider having several places at home and in the car where books are readily available. A cardboard box that the child is allowed to decorate with art work or scribbling is a simple solution. A low shelf or a bottom drawer also allows easy access. Having a section of a shelf on family bookcases lets your child know his books are important, too.

What to look for in a book—Good books for young children need to be well made and **durable**. Little ones like to really explore their favorite books, carrying them around, tugging on the pages, and even “mouthing” them. Large, colorful pictures attract children to books and hold their interest. The youngest children will enjoy photographs or realistic pictures which help them relate the book to familiar things in their surroundings. Preschoolers are attracted to a wide variety of artwork in books. Good stories with interesting characters and a plot with lots of action also appeal to preschoolers, where babies and toddlers are interested in books with just a few words on the page or ones that label objects in the pictures. Choose books for all ages that picture people with a variety of cultures, races, physical abilities or occupations.

Good books for babies to 1 year:

- Thick cardboard pages
- Small, chunky format
- Few or no words on a page
- Flexible cloth or vinyl pages
- Simple, bright pictures or photos
- Themes that encourage sounds (farm animals, vehicles, etc.)

Good books for toddlers and twos:

- Cardboard or thick paper pages
- Pictures that tell a story without words
- Nursery rhymes or rhyming words
- Simple concepts like colors or shapes
- Repetition of words or phrases
- A story told in a few, simple words
- Stories about familiar, everyday things

Good books for preschoolers:

- Increasingly more complicated stories
- Folktales
- Rhyming text or poetry
- Color, letter or number themes
- Stories about different cultures and places
- Stories about issues children face (fears, separation, starting school)
- Humorous plots or characters
- Non-fiction subjects

FATHER COACHING - Asking for Directions

Some fathers—seeking balance in their lives and better relationships with their kids—are turning to personal coaches.

We hear a lot these days about employed mothers struggling to balance work and family life. But fathers face many of the same pressures, says **Mark Brandenburg**, a former therapist and **personal coach specializing in coaching dads**.

Brandenburg gives men tips on how to manage their multiple responsibilities and improve their relationships with their children. He is part of a fast-growing field of personal coaches who specialize in family life.

Question. What are some of the most common concerns fathers bring up?

ANSWER. One is: How do I balance my life so it feels a little more under my control?

By and large, fathers across the country are making a commitment to be more involved with their kids. They're feeding their babies at night, they're driving their kids to activities, they're reading to their kids. They're doing things their fathers never did.

At the same time, the workweek is longer than it has ever been. So, they're really getting squeezed from both sides. Like many mothers who are working, they are feeling guilty if they spend too much time at work and don't spend time with their kids. And they're feeling guilty if they spend too much time with their kids and not enough time at work.

Q. What other struggles do dads talk to you about?

A. Another theme is this sort of gnawing sense of not being intimate with other family members.

Fathers often feel they're not part of that emotional core of the family. At it's worst, it's "I feel like I'm the handyman."

Risking a gross generalization, mothers tend to have more of those connection skills. So, what fathers often find is their kids are talking to their mother about things that happened at school or problems they're having. And fathers tend to feel left out.

Q. What can fathers do to connect with their kids?

A. Dads are often very bottom-line-focused people. But the family is a very different culture than work. Often, fathers feel impatient and don't want to waste their time doing "meaningless" things with their kids.

One thing I suggest is to **actually lie on the floor and be with your kids**. Do what they want to do for a change. We have this idea we need to entertain our kids, take them here and take them there. But sometimes, we need fathers to just flop down on the floor and spend 45 minutes playing marbles.

My experience is fathers are impatient with that. They're thinking, "I don't want to sit here and play this silly game." They're thinking, "I could be mowing the grass."

But we can't develop that bond with our kids if we don't push the limits of our own impatience. And the only way you do that is to practice. You lie down on the floor and see if you can handle 15 minutes. And then maybe the next time, you can do a bit more.

Another thing fathers aren't typically very good about is sharing their day with their kids. You get a group of mothers together, and the first thing they do is talk about intimate details of their lives. And you get a group of dads together, and talk is about sports or the stock market.

In order to be closer to their kids, fathers have to be willing to share their lives with their kids. I've actually suggested fathers jot down notes of things that have happened to them during the day so when they came home to the family dinner, they could talk about how their day went. Because they just weren't sharing.

Violence prevention for families and society**Spare the Child, Ditch the Rod!**

Spare the rod, spoil the child! This philosophy's been around a long time.

In fact, a study done by Zero to Three, a nonprofit child-development group, found that 61 percent of the adults who responded condone spanking as a regular form of punishment. The percentage of parents who actually use spanking is believed to be much higher.

And when my five year old son's behavior went beyond annoying a few days ago, I felt inclined to join the majority and swat him to "teach him a lesson." Most parents reach this point with their kids. We feel as though we can't take any more of what our kids are dishing out. It usually happens when we're tired, stressed, and overdone.

So what are our choices when we reach this point?

Spanking certainly can take care of things quickly and can temporarily change your kids behavior. But there are many reasons to question the practice of spanking your kids. Here's five of them:

1. **Do you really want your kids to be afraid of you?** Kids will sometimes obey more readily when they're afraid of you. Is this what you really want? What happens when they're six feet two and two hundred pounds? Effective parenting is based on love and respect, not fear.
2. **Spanking shows your kids that you lack self-control.** The huge majority of spanking incidents come when a parent is angry. What is quite clear to your child is this: when my Dad or Mom gets angry, they hit me. And when the same child hits his sister when he gets angry, do you demand that he shows better self-control? Something's wrong with this picture. We teach our kids best through our own actions.
3. **You may breed resentment and anger in your kids.** Kids who are spanked usually don't learn a great deal about "correcting" their misbehavior. They don't usually sit up in their rooms and say, "Gosh, I can really see after getting spanked that I was wrong. I'll do better now." They do think about how angry their Dad or Mom is, and they can develop a good deal of resentment for their parents.
4. **Spanking shows your kids that "might makes right."** Adults make mistakes in their lives too, right? Can we use our imaginations and feel what it would be like for someone four times our size to pick us up and swat us on the butt? What would we learn from that? Would we feel any injustice? You can bet that your kids are feeling some.
5. **Spanking isn't effective in the long run.** Parents who are asked why they spank will report that they use it to "teach their kids a lesson," or so they won't misbehave again. Many kids who are spanked will go underground with their misbehavior and become more cunning to avoid being caught. (Wouldn't you?) If you're spanking your kids fairly often, doesn't this show that it's not working very well?

I don't believe that kids who are spanked occasionally are ruined for life. Nor do I believe that spanking is necessary to discipline a child. There are countless examples of disciplined and responsible young people who were never spanked by their parents.

Parents who don't spank their kids use time outs, re-directing, or distracting with their kids. They can pick their kids up and let them cool down, or simply leave the area themselves so they don't do something they'd regret later.

While these methods aren't always perfect, they help to form the foundation of a certain kind of household: One in which violence is not "taught" as a means to better behavior.

After all, we live in a world that's filled with violence.

Can't we provide a place for our kids where there isn't any?

Source: *Dads Don't Fix Your Kids* (www.markbrandenburg.com). ~HI Dads~

Spousal battery and spanking

In the overwhelming majority of cases, husbands and wives whose relationships include violence are also violent toward their children. It is likely that they were spanked when they were little, or witnessed others being spanked.

Battering and battered spouses who spank their children may be raising them to become batterers and victims like themselves.

The children learn from the parents' example that the way to vent frustration, express disapproval and assert authority is by hitting someone smaller and weaker than themselves.

They see this principle demonstrated every time they witness their parents come to blows, as well as every time they are on the receiving end of violent punishments. They learn that once they are big enough and strong enough, they can control others by threatening or hurting them. They learn that it is okay for husbands and wives to mistreat each other and for adults to mistreat children.

When children, whose personalities have been formed in violent households, grow up and have children of their own, they find it very difficult to break free from the behaviors they have witnessed and experienced. The skills they apply to family life will be the poor ones they learned from their parents, and they are likely to perpetuate the cycle of abuse through their own innocent children.

As spanking disappears from family life, other forms of domestic violence will also disappear.

Adapted from: *Plain Talk About Spanking* (<http://nospank.net/pt2009.htm>). ~HI Dads~

"If I can't spank, what can I do?"

Learn to be firm, but fair. Use POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

Fathers are often expected to be the parent who disciplines the children. With this expectation comes our responsibility as parents—as fathers—to learn how to guide our keiki with positive discipline.

Positive discipline includes:

Create a set of rules. Set rules and consequences that fit your child's age and development. Be clear about what is expected—and what is not OK. Enforce rules and consequences consistently and promptly.

Don't hit. Physical punishment teaches fear—not respect. If you feel angry, take time to cool off. Then deal with the misbehaviors. People are not for hitting...and children are people, too.

Praise good behavior. Let your child know you appreciate it when he or she is well-behaved.

Offer a choice. Offering your child a choice of several activities—rather than deciding for them—encourages cooperation and teaches responsibility.

Try a time-out. If your child misbehaves, give her or him a few minutes alone to calm down and think about their behavior (while you cool off, too).

Tell your child that you still love them...even when discipline is necessary.

Source: *Being a Good Father*, Channing Bete Company (www.channing-bete.com). ~HI Dads~

Support the Hawai'i Coalition for Dads.

Help promote involved, nurturing, responsible fatherhood in Hawai'i.

☐ Please keep me informed about the activities of the Hawai'i Coalition for Dads.

☐ I would like to volunteer to help; contact me.

☐ Here is my contribution. \$ _____

~ Your donations are tax-deductible. ~

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Please make your check payable to: **Hawai'i Coalition for Dads/PACT** Phone: 841-2245

...and send it to: 1485 Linapuni St. #105; Honolulu, Hawai'i 96819

E-mail: HawaiiDads@pacthawaii.org

Hawai'i Coalition for Dads

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The Hawai'i Coalition for Dads, with funding from the HMSA Foundation under the umbrella of Parents And Children Together (PACT), is a group of individuals and organizations that shares information about services to fathers and promotes involved, nurturing, responsible fatherhood.

GOALS:

1. To enhance the ability of Hawai'i's children to grow in peaceful and safe environments.
2. To increase community awareness about fatherhood.
3. To promote the availability and accessibility of quality, father-centered community resources.
4. To advocate for informed public policy regarding fatherhood.
5. To strengthen community collaboration in support of fatherhood.
6. To respect and honor everyone's unique role in children's lives.

Fatherhood & Family Resources

1. **Hilo**: YWCA of Hawaii Island (Healthy Start) (961-3877; ywcawahaiiisland.org)
 2. **Kailua-Kona**: Family Support Services of West Hawai'i (326-7778; fsswh.org)
 3. **Kaua'i**: Nana's Place/Child and Family Service (338-0252; cfs-hawaii.org)
 4. **Maui**: Da dee Fatherhood Program—Maui Family Support Services (242-0900; mfss.org);
Neighborhood Place of Wailuku (986-0700); Maui Economic Opportunity (249-2990; meo.org)
 5. **Molokai**: Mediation Center of Molokai (553-3844)
- Oahu (and statewide):**
6. Hawai'i State Commission on Fatherhood (www.hawaii.gov/dhs/fatherhood/fatherhood)
 7. TIFFE (Nurturing Fathers; Playgroups) (596-8433; www.tiffe.org)
 8. PACT (Family Centers; Hana Like; Head Start; Family Peace Center) (847-3285; www.pacthawaii.org)
 9. Navy Fleet & Family Support Center (Boot Camp For New Dads) (474-1999; www.greatlife-hawaii.com)
 10. PARENTS (235-0488); 11. Kathy's Parenting Solutions (352-3303; kathysparentingsolutions.com)
 12. The Baby Hui (groups for Dads, and Moms) (735-2484; thebabyhui.org)
 13. The Parent Line (Info & Referral) (526-1222; www.theparentline.org) 14. AUW – 211 (auw.org/211)
 15. HPIRC (HI Parental Information & Resource Centers) (841-6177; hawaiipirc.org)
 16. DOE Family Support (PCNC; Families for R.E.A.L.; VISTA) (733-4476; familysupport.k12.hi.us)
 17. SPIN (Special Parent Information Network) (586-8126; spin-hawaii.org)
 18. Big Brothers Big Sisters (support for single Dads, and Moms) (521-3811; bigshonolulu.org)
 19. Good Beginnings Alliance (Playgroups) (531-5502; goodbeginnings.org)
 20. Tutu and Me (traveling preschool for Hawaiian families) (524-7633; tutuandme.org)
 21. Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center (Hawaiian families) (847-1302; qlcc.org)
 22. ALU LIKE (Hawaiian families) (535-6700; alulike.org)

Religious resources: Contact your place of worship...church, temple, synagogue

Internet Resources (check on their "Links," too):

1. **mr.dad** (mrdad.com)
2. **fathers.com** (fathers.com)
3. **Nurturing Father** (nurturingfathers.com)
4. **Nat'l Fatherhood Initiative** (fatherhood.org)
5. **ParentingTime.net** (parentingtime.net)